Councilmember Jane Hague

County Report

METROPOLITAN
KING COUNTY
COUNCIL
DISTRICT 11

Dear Neighbors,

The issue of homelessness has brought out many opinions and concerns from all residents within King County. Eastsiders have been closely watching this issue due to the siting of Tent City4 in Bothell (originally at property adjacent to the Brickyard Park-n-Ride and currently at St. Brendan Catholic Church property). Throughout the County's encampment siting process I have heard from many District 11 residents.

The focus of this newsletter is to provide you with a brief history and overview of the issues surrounding homeless encampments. Major decisions will have to be made early this Fall regarding the appropriate role of the County and its properties regarding homeless encampments.



Thank you for allowing me to serve you on this issue and many others. Please feel free to contact me with your questions and concerns at (206) 296-1011 or jane.hague@metrokc.gov.

With warm regards,



- Homelessness issues affecting King County government
- Legislation before the Metropolitan King County Council
- Websites and Links on Tent City Issues



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Please visit my website @

www.metrokc.gov/hague

HOMELESSNESS: AFFECTING KING COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The concept of tent cities in King County began in 1990. In March 2000, Tent City3 was started by SHARE (Seattle Housing and Resource Effort) and WHEEL (Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League) and it has been operating continuously within the city of Seattle as well as Shoreline, Tukwila and Burien. Seattle City Council grappled with the issue of permitting homeless encampments back in the early 1990's and in 2002. The city originally considered the Tent City3 encampment to be illegal and cited its host for not applying for a permit to have the encampment on its land, threatened to fine the host, and eventually took the host to King County Superior Court.

In 2002, a judge ruled that Seattle had improperly denied a permit to the tent city host and later settled the case through a consent decree that made tent cities legal within Seattle under certain conditions. Since then, tent cities have found many churches with land and memberships willing to support an encapement on their properties. The typical length of stay is 60 – 90 days at each location.

During the 2004 Budget process, SHARE/WHEEL leaders first approached King County Councilmembers by requesting support for a tent city to be located on County land. An order called a "proviso" was placed in the 2004 Budget requiring the Executive to report to the Council on three County-owned or -controlled properties that would be potential sites for tent city encampments. The County Executive was directed to coordinate the locations with nearby faith-based organizations and to provide neighborhood outreach on the encampments. The Council placed this order in the budget so that a study could be transmitted,

thus providing a legislative process for proper debate and public comment on the issue.

This proviso was then vetoed by the County Executive in December of 2003. In late March of 2004, SHARE/WHEEL stated that it would move Tent City4 into an unnamed County park if the Executive did not provide an alternative site. Soon after this demand was made, the Executive announced that he would provide property adjacent to the Brickyard



Park-n-Ride for Tent City4. The Council had no legal authority to overturn the Executive's decision to contract with SHARE/WHEEL.

A neighborhood committee then formed, The Brickyard Area Community for Fair Process, and it chose to sue the County for permitting Tent City4 at the Brickyard location citing lack of due process and concerns about the effects of encampment on the property's wetlands. The day the lawsuit was to be heard in court, May 14, Executive Sims announced that Tent City would be moving to vacant land owned by St. Brendan Catholic Church for a 90-day stay. Due to legal concerns, the Executive decided it was best to not site the encampment on County property.

A third key lawsuit regarding tent cities in the King County area was recently filed by the City of Bothell against St. Brendan Parish Church citing that "camping" on private property requires a city permit, public notification and public input. At a King County Superior Court hearing, Bothell hoped to have Tent

City4 evicted from St. Brendan's property and to require a number of concessions from the church and tent city.

In mid-June, Superior Court Judge Steven Scott ruled that St. Brendan did not have to pay for police security for Tent City4 and that the encampment dwellers would not be required to provide their identification to police due to constitutional privacy rights. However, the judge did require St. Brendan church officials and homeless camp organizers to file for a special use permit.

The requirement of a permit provided the city council with direct oversight as well as the possibility of acquiring additional concessions from the church and Tent City4 that were not given in court. On July 19, the Bothell City Council approved a special conditional use permit for Tent City4 to occupy land owned by St. Brendan Church but it was for a different site. Tent City4 had to move within three days of the city's ruling to a playfield that is three blocks from the former Tent City4 location.

The Bothell Council also placed a number of restrictions on the encampment as part of the approved permit. (To learn more about the details of the council's decision, please see the Bothell City web site listed on page 3.) The City Council's decision can be appealed to King County Superior Court. The city is also determining what its next steps will be to prepare for any potential future homeless encampments.

Tent City4 is scheduled to be located on St. Brendan property until August 15 when the encampment then moves to a new location. Woodinville Alliance Church was the next potential host site, but on July 13 the Church announced its decision to not be the next host for Tent City4. The King County Executive is in the process of trying to find a new site for the mid-August tent city move.

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LEGISLATION BEFORE THE METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL

The King County Council approved legislation on June 1 that allowed formation of a citizens' advisory commission on homeless encampments. The appointees to this 22-member commission were approved on June 14 and are charged with:

- Performing an evaluation of homelessness in King County;
- Providing policy and procedural guidelines for determining the location of any potential future encampments; and
- Recommending options for locating such encampments on public or private land in King County.

The commission consists of 18 voting members -

including each Councilmember's nomination of one appointee to represent the citizens of their council district - and four advisory members who represent human service agencies that work on homeless and housing issues, on law enforcement and on public health issues. The commission is to report back to the Council with its recommendations by August 15.

It is important to note that the ordinance authorizing this commission forbids the County from identifying or from locating homeless encampments on County-owned property prior to September 15, 2004. In mid-September, the Executive is expected to transmit legislation addressing long-term solutions to homelessness.

KEY WEBSITES ON TENT CITY ISSUES

To learn more about the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments, its purpose, and to find a variety of informative links on homelessness, please see: http://www.metrokc.gov/dchs/CACHE

For meeting information and agendas of the Metropolitan King County Council, please see: www.metrokc.gov/council

For other informative sites not listed at the e-addresses above, visit:

Real Change, an organization focused on creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty. Real Change's web site provides information and links

regarding issues challenging those who are low-income and homeless: http://www.realchangenews.org

Saint Brendan Catholic Church has a site that discusses the church's experience of hosting Tent City4 and a schedule of its weekly meetings regarding the encapement please see: http://www.saintbrendan.org/Church/PopUp.html

Care4Schools is a site hosted by a grassroots Bothell community organization focused on protecting their community and children, please see: http://www.care4schools.org/blog

City of Bothell's web page regarding Tent City4 issues: http://www.ci.bothell.wa.us/dept/CM/PIO/NewsEvents/ FYIS/TentCity.html

POLICY ISSUES TO BE DEBATED - Let me know your thoughts

Important decisions will be made early this Fall regarding the County's role in solving the problem of homelessness in King County, including whether or not homeless encampments should be allowed on public (County) property.

This issue tends to elicit strong opinions from citizens because it affects everyone. I would like to hear from you regarding the following key policy questions on homelessness:

• What is the County's role in providing solutions to homelessness?

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- Is it appropriate for County property to be used for homeless encampments?
- If yes, should the encampments be temporary or allowed to be permanent?
- What locations are most appropriate or inappropriate for homeless encampments?
- What factors must be taken into consideration when siting homeless encampments?

COUNCILMEMBER JANE HAGUE

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Hague Nominates Steve Pyeatt as the District 11 representative on the King County Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments.

Councilmember Hague nominated Steve Pyeatt to represent District 11 on the King County Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments and he was appointed to the commission on June 1, 2004. Pyeatt has attended community meetings on the tent city encampment in Bothell and was a founding member of what is now called the King Communities for Fair Process. He is very active in other community organizations including his role as chair of fund raising events for the American Cancer Society. He also has been officiating football for nearly 15 years - a hobby that combines his passion for the game with his desire to work with youth. Pyeatt currently runs a computer web hosting and site development company and he lives in Kirkland.

Please drop this in the mail to me, or, e-mail me your responses at jane.hague@metrokc.gov	
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	first
	stam

Place first class stamp here

Councilmember Jane Hague

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